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C O N F I D E N T I A L LA PAZ 001942

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [ASEC](#) [PTER](#) [BL](#)  
SUBJECT: BOLIVIA: MORALES DECLARES AMBASSADOR PNG

REF: 07 LA PAZ 2312

Classified By: Ambassador Philip S. Goldberg for reasons 1.4 b,d

¶1. (C) Summary: One day after the Bolivian government informed Post that DEA agents were indefinitely expelled from the Chapare, President Evo Morales announced on national television September 10 that Ambassador Goldberg is persona non grata and requested that Foreign Minister David Choquehuanca take care of the legal details to establish this PNG status. End summary.

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Morales Declares Ambassador Persona Non Grata  
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¶2. (SBU) The afternoon of September 10, President Evo Morales announced on national television that Ambassador Goldberg is persona non grata. Before an audience at the palace Morales said: "There is a foreign authority here that heads the division of Bolivia and conspires against democracy. And I take advantage of this opportunity, I am not afraid, I feel that the Bolivian people, the youth, is anti-imperialist, anti-neoliberal, and anti-colonial and this is our experience, of years not only recently. The one who conspires against democracy and above all seeks division of Bolivia is the ambassador of the United States, and I want to tell you, sisters and brothers, this man (reading from notes) is an expert in fomenting separatist conflicts, that between the years 1994 and 1996 he was the chief of the office of the Department of State for Bosnia during the separatist war of the Balkans. Later in 2004 and 2006, the current U.S. ambassador in Bolivia returned as Chief of Mission in Pristina, Kosovo, and there he consolidated the separation or independence of that region, leaving thousands of dead. And without fear of anyone, without fear of the empire, today, in front of you all, in front of the Bolivian people, I declare Mr. Goldberg, Ambassador of the United States, persona non grata. I ask our foreign minister, complying with the legal

and diplomatic requirements, to send today to the ambassador, letting him know the decision of the national government, of its president, so that he will urgently return to his country. We do not want separatist, divisionist people, nor that they conspire against unity. We do not want people who make attempts against democracy. This decision that we make is homage to the historic fight of our peoples, since 500 years, since 200 years, just like since 20 years. A permanent fight against an economic model imposed from outside and afar."

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The Ambassador's Meeting With FM Choquehuanca  
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13. (C) The Ambassador learned of Morales' public declaration while in meeting with the Foreign Minister that Ambassador had requested to address the government's September 9 decision to expel the DEA "indefinitely" from the Chimore police base in the Chapare (Morales' coca-growing stronghold). Foreign Minister Choquehuanca had not heard of the DEA's expulsion, and he was equally surprised when he was called out of the meeting to receive a phone call from President Morales. When Choquehuanca returned to the meeting, he seemed awkward, and said that he had received "unfortunate news: the President just called to say that he has publicly announced that you are persona non grata." The Ambassador calmly but forcefully said that this was a "historic error" after the better part of 160 years of friendly bilateral relations and asked Choquehuanca if this was a final decision. Choquehuanca said "the president is the president" and will make his own decisions but said he would speak with Morales. When the Ambassador asked if he would be notified officially of a decision, Choquehuanca answered that he did not know the mechanism to formally PNG the Ambassador but that he would consult with his staff and get back to us. The Ambassador pointed out that no country has recently PNGed a U.S. Ambassador and "you should have a solid reason" to take such a historic action, an action that the Ambassador clarified would have serious consequences for the bilateral relationship.

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Background on the Expulsion of DEA from the Chapare  
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14. (C) The evening of September 9, local Anti-Narcotics Police Chief General Rene Sanabria contacted DEA Country Attache Patrick Stenkamp to say that the two DEA agents posted at the National Police base in Chimore should be evacuated because there was a risk from cocaleros who threatened to take the base. By 9pm the DEA agents were evacuated. The next morning in a meeting with Stenkamp, Sanabria suggested a more-political reason for the expulsion, saying that Presidency Minister Ramon Quintana "knows which buttons to push to get Morales upset."

15. (C) Stenkamp and Narcotics Affairs Section Director Joseph Manso met the morning of September 10 with Felipe Caceres, the Vice Minister of Social Defense and "Drug Czar". Caceres confirmed that the DEA agents needed to leave the Chapare, saying that it had to happen because President Morales was "upset that the DEA is following him, especially when he visits his girlfriends." Caceres said that he knew this was not true, that DEA was only involved in counter-narcotics operations and then usually from the base in Chimore, but that "people including Quintana are putting poison in the President's ear." Caceres said that Morales was "very upset". Caceres also gave the impression that he himself had been the source of the warning through Sanabria to DEA, hoping to forestall a more dramatic and irreversible act if the cocaleros or the government had acted against the DEA agents in Chimore. When Stenkamp and Manso asked for a date when the DEA agents could return to the Chapare, Caceres was unable to give a date saying that the decision was "indefinite" and asking why the DEA even had to be in the Chapare, "why can't they just work at the borders?"

¶6. (C) The Ambassador informed Washington and requested a meeting with Defense Minister Walker San Miguel, who is on the interagency counter-narcotic board. Walker San Miguel was surprised to hear of the decision and said it had not been discussed in the interagency board. Walker San Miguel suggested that the Ambassador raise the issue with Foreign Minister Choquehuanca, who is the chairman of the interagency board. When the Ambassador began his meeting with Choquehuanca, it was clear that this development also came as a surprise to Choquehuanca. The Ambassador requested a date when the DEA agents could return to the Chapare and that the government position be clarified.

¶7. (C) Choquehuanca offered to try to find out more about the situation with DEA, saying that the government had "lots of problems" at the moment in Santa Cruz and suggesting that Morales might not have mentioned the DEA's expulsion because he was preoccupied with other issues. Choquehuanca also warned the Ambassador that "social groups" are connecting the USG with violence in Santa Cruz, and people are reacting to perceived USG interference in Bolivian violence and angry about the fact that the USG is "protecting Goni." "Each day it gets worse," Choquehuanca said, adding that he worried that the relation was deteriorating. The Ambassador pointed out that the government itself, and President Morales personally, are planting these ideas with the social groups, and that it is the responsibility of the government to tell the social groups the truth. At this point, Choquehuanca was called from the meeting for his phone call with Morales in which Choquehuanca learned of Morales' intent to PNG the Ambassador.

¶8. (C) Within minutes of Morales's broadcast, Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez made a live broadcast on Telesur congratulating Morales on his decision.

¶9. (C) Later in the evening Choquehuanca called the Ambassador to tell him that a note was being prepared to officially notify us of the PNG and asked the Ambassador to come to his office to receive it on 9/11. The Ambassador told Choquehuanca that there was no need to have him come to participate in a media circus and that the Foreign Ministry could simply deliver the diplomatic note to the Embassy.  
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